

Message Text

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16
ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 ISO-00 CAB-02 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00

DOTE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 CIEP-01 FAA-00 L-03 H-02 SS-15

NSC-05 IO-13 /063 W
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R 120436Z AUG 76
FM AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1699
INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
AMCONSUL SYDNEY

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE PORT MORESBY 0815

E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: ETRN, PP
SUBJ: AIR NIUGINI ADDS SYDNEY TO ITS INTERNATIONAL STOPS
AND LOOKS FARTHER AFIELD

REF: PORT MORESBY 0749

1. TRANSPORT MINISTER, BRUCE JEPHCOTT, TOLD THE NATIONAL PARLIAMENT AUGUST 10 THAT AIR NIUGINI WILL OPERATE A DIRECT SERVICE FROM PORT MORESBY TO SYDNEY UNDER A REVISED CIVIL AVIATION ARRANGEMENT INITIALED IN CANBERRA AUGUST 4. AIR NIUGINI WILL ALSO OPEN ITS OWN SALES OFFICE IN SYDNEY NEXT MONTH. THE NEW SERVICE WILL COMMENCE IN NOVEMBER.

2. JEPHCOTT SAID QANTAS WOULD BE GIVEN TRAFFIC RIGHTS TO OPERATE TO PORT MORESBY (WHICH IT DOES NOW) AND ANOTHER PORT TO BE NOMINATED LATER. THERE ARE NO OTHER PORTS SUITABLE FOR QANTAS AIRCRAFT IN PNG AT THE MOMENT. JEPHCOTT SAID THE TERMS OF THE PROPOSED AGREEMENT EQUALLY DIVIDED THE TRAFFIC BETWEEN QANTAS AND AIR NIUGINI AT A PROFITABLE LEVEL. PREVIOUSLY, QANTAS ENJOYED A 70/30 IMBALANCE. THE NEW ARRANGEMENTS REPLACE THE INTERIM ARRANGEMENT UNDER WHICH BOTH QANTAS AND AIR NIUGINI HAVE OPERATED SINCE INDEPENDENCE SEPTEMBER 1975. THE DRAFT IS

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BEING REFERRED TO EACH GOVERNMENT FOR APPROVAL.

3. JEPHCOTT ALSO SAID THAT THERE IS POSSIBILITY OF GAINING NEW ZEALAND LANDING RIGHTS FOR AIR NIUGINI, BUT WOULD NOT DIVULGE FURTHER DETAILS.

4. OUTSIDE THE HOUSE JEPHCOTT SAID THE GOVERNMENT WAS STILL CONSIDERING WHETHER TO BUY AN EXTRA BOEING AIRCRAFT FROM QANTAS OR RENEW ITS WET LEASE CHARTER OPERATION WITH TEMPAIR. HE SAID THE AIRLINES COMMISSION WOULD PROBABLY MEET NEXT WEEK TO FURTHER DISCUSS THE MATTER.

5. UNEXPECTEDLY, JEPHCOTT ALSO ANNOUNCED YESTERDAY THAT AIR NAURU WOULD SOON BE ABLE TO PICK UP PASSENGERS AT MOMOTE ON MANUS ISLAND FOR FLIGHTS TO NAURU. PREVIOUSLY AIR NAURU HAD RIGHTS FOR REFUELLING AND TECHNICAL STOPS AND COULD NOT PICK UP PASSENGERS.

6. COMMENT: AS NOTED REFTTEL, PNG APPEARS TO BE MOVING FORWARD TO INCREASE ITS PRESENTLY RESTRICTED AIR LINKS TO OTHER PARTS OF THE PACIFIC. THERE HAS BEEN SOME TALK OF AIR NEW ZEALAND WANTING TO COME TO PORT MORESBY, BUT THIS IS THE FIRST INDICATION THE EMBASSY HAS HAD OF RECIPROCAL INTEREST. THE GRANTING OF PASSENGER RIGHTS AT MOMOTE TO AIR NAURU, WHILE OF LIMITED USEFULNESS, IS ALSO SOMEWHAT SURPRISING SINCE THAT AIRLINE HAS TRIED FOR SOME TIME WITHOUT SUCCESS TO ACHIEVE THIS GOAL. CONDITIONS APPEAR TO BE CHANGING RELATIVELY QUICKLY. FOR EXAMPLE, THE EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS QANTAS OFFICIALS FOUGHT QUITE HARD TO PREVENT THE EXTENSION OF LANDING RIGHTS AT SYDNEY TO AIR NIUGINI, BUT WAS APPARENTLY OVER RULED BY CANBERRA. THE GARUDA COFREPAON PROBABLY HAS AS MUCH POLITICAL CONTENT (VIEWED BY BOTH GOVERNMENTS) AS ECONOMIC AT THIS STAGE. LINKS ARE NOW BEING FORGED THAT HAD TO AWAIT INDEPENDENCE AND THESE LINKS WILL DEFINITELY BE STRENGTHENED IN THE MONTHS AHEAD.
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